

REGION 7
CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Notes
June 20, 2007

FWP ATTENDANCE: Bryce Christensen, Mike Moore, Todd Anderson, John Ensign, Dwayne Andrews, Brad Schmitz, Windy Davis, Ginger Omland, and John Little.

CAC ATTENDANCE: Rob Reukauf, Art Hayes, Julie Jordan, Greg Mohr, Jim Schaefer, Chris Pileski, Mary Zeiss Stange

GUEST SPEAKERS: Chris Smith, Chief of Staff, FWP; Rob Brooks, Responsive Management Unit, FWP; Todd Anderson, R-7 Warden, FWP

ABSENT: Warren Broeder, Todd Steadman, John Wilkinson, Mark Forman, and Larry Woolston

Bryce welcomed everyone and introduced Todd Anderson, Miles City FWP Warden.

Todd reviewed his presentation, **Poaching: Enough is Enough**, for those that were not in attendance at the last CAC meeting.

Todd stated that since the last CAC meeting, one of the bills that recently passed in the last legislative session included hiring of regional investigators. Regions 6 and 7 will be sharing one investigator.

The economic impact of hunting and fishing in Region 7 is listed as follows:

- \$16.5 million spent by hunters in local communities;
- Anglers spend \$4.7 million;
- Number of hunters in Montana in 2005 was 231,497;
- Numbers of anglers in MT in 2005 was 379,497.

On average, each year, 10,000 mule deer bucks and 6,400 mule deer does are harvested; 2,700 whitetail bucks and 2,200 white tail does are harvested.

Todd said three of the top five cities in the U.S. that have the most hunters are located in Montana which are Glendive, Missoula, and Butte.

Chris Smith stated that the newest figures show there are more hunters in South Dakota and Wyoming and Montana is in third place.

Greg asked if Todd had any figures as to what the restitution was in poaching cases.

Chris Smith answered that in the last couple of years, it has run anywhere from \$160,000 to \$180,000 per year and that with the passage and approval of SB115, all of that restitution now comes to FWP. That money is tied to the additional investigator positions that were requested and demonstrated a way to fund those positions.

At this time, Bryce introduced Rob Brooks from the Helena FWP Responsive Management Unit who gave an excellent presentation on the Montana Challenge Project.

Montana Challenge

Rob's presentation showed changes reflecting trends in population and migration throughout Montana.

Goals of project:

1. Document and understand Montana's changing social and economic conditions.
2. Analyze how those changes affect fish, wildlife, their habitats, and human uses.
3. Discuss with Montanans the implications for natural resource and economic development.

Funding:

There are two main project sponsors: Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the Forest Service; a couple of cooperators: Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and early on, they had some project funding matching money for the federal dollars from these different foundations and groups.

Information sources:

Credible information from the public sector which means state and federal government and universities.

For more information you can visit The Montana Challenge Website:

<http://fwp/mt.gov/tmc>

Mary thought solutions are going to be hard to implement in this part of the state.

Chris Smith added that applying a single policy all across the state may not work.

Rob noted that Montana Challenge Project is sustaining our natural resources for their traditional values and deeply personal meaning to Montanans and their ability to attract the economic activity vital to our state's future.

Break for Dinner

Bryce introduced Chris Smith, Chief of Staff, Helena FWP who presented awards to John Ensign and Dwayne Andrews. John Ensign was given thanks on behalf of the National Wild Turkey Federation for all his work in helping with turkey transplants for the last four years which included trapping a total of 534 turkeys. Dwayne Andrews was presented the Gary Holmquist Sportsmans Achievement Award from the Montana Wildlife Association in acknowledgment of his work in the last four years on the public lands signing project.

Chris gave a brief summary of the recent legislative session.

Fisheries Programs

- Future Fisheries Program was made permanent;
- General fund money was approved to complete the T& Y bypass;
- Water rights lease to allow FWP to continue to lease water for more than 10 years;
- Warm water stamp is required whether you intend to keep fish or not now.

Chris said that would increase warm water stamp sales but not enough to cover the gap between the cost of operating the Ft. Peck Hatchery and the revenue from the warm water stamp which generates between one-half to two-thirds of what is needed to fund the hatchery. However, there is a fund balance that will sustain it for the next two to four years.

Bryce brought up that R7 CAC had addressed the situation and came up with an excellent solution. He said, in May, an e-mail was sent out to the CAC members asking for a volunteer to serve on the Ft. Peck Hatchery Council and Greg Mohr did volunteer for that.

Law Enforcement

- Poachers package
- Elimination of vacancy savings

Licensing

- Three more species added to super tags: Antelope, mountain lion, and bison;
- Wolf hunting license;
- One wolf and one grizzly bear license through auction or lottery;
- Free fishing licenses for youth, seniors, and Purple Heart recipients;
- Social security number requirements changed;
- Reduce license fee for ewe sheep and antlerless moose;
- General elk is no longer a prerequisite to obtain a second elk tag.

Wildlife

- HB 364 established a livestock loss reduction and mitigation program.
- This program provides funds that can be used either to cost share efforts by livestock producers to reduce the risk of losing livestock to wolves or to pay livestock producers fair market value for any livestock that are lost.

Parks

- Ten million general fund appropriations for acquisition of new parks and fishing access sites.

Mike Moore asked about the free licenses and backfilling the loss of revenue from that from general funds.

Chris answered that it is the first time the legislature has authorized use of general funds to support our fisheries and wildlife programs.

Comments from the Public

LeRoy Kuper introduced himself and said he would like the commission to keep the hoop net in the lower Yellowstone for this next four years.

Brad responded that the tentative decision is to keep hoop netting but with restrictions such as mandatory reporting and eliminating all species harvested except catfish.

LeRoy was pleased with that tentative decision.

Some of the CAC members asked for an explanation of hoop netting to which Brad Schmitz and LeRoy Kuper responded. Brad said the key to keeping hoop netting is to gather the data back from the hoop netters on what they are catching, etc.

Bryce asked if there were any more questions for Chris.

Rob R. brought up stream access and bridge issues.

Jim S. thought western Montana would be more in favor of assuring stream access than eastern Montana.

Chris said the traditional Montana landowners have generally been very generous in allowing public access which is not the case with many of the new landowners, particularly from out-of-state.

Rob R. asked if Brad had checked into the FAS that he had suggested and Brad said he would do that before the next meeting.

Bryce then called for any other items for discussion.

Rob inquired about the wolf situation and where they were coming from.

Chris said they could be coming from out of the Yellowstone population or anywhere in Western Montana. He said there are wolves distributed anywhere from the Canadian border to the Wyoming border.

Greg M. asked what the time frame was in making a decision for possible fishing access sites.

Chris responded that by the end of the year, they would have a fairly good idea.

Bryce reported that Private Lands, Public Wildlife Advisory Council is looking for individuals to be on their council and asked if the CAC knew of anyone that should be considered for nominations to that council.

Jim S. commented that when attending functions in Washington, he was very amazed by the number of people from Washington and Oregon who were very impressed and happy to have the Block Management Program because it enables accessibility for hunters.

The next Region 7 Citizen's Advisory Council meeting will be held on September 12, 2007.

Meeting adjourned.